

At a November 2, 2006, Shared Responsibility Conference in London, which was sponsored by the Government of Colombia, the UN Office of Drugs and Crime, UNODC, Executive Director Antonio Maria Costa sounded similar alarm bells on the massive increase in cocaine flow to Europe from Colombia and the Andean region. He said, regarding cocaine, among many important things, "Wake up Europe! You are heading for a crisis."

I ask that the full text of the UNODC official's statement on this important subject be printed in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, and urge all my colleagues to see how the burden of our drug-fighting efforts in Colombia and elsewhere in the region ought to also be shared by our European friends as well.

UNITED NATIONS

Office on Drugs and Crime

Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director

COCAINE IN EUROPE: A WAKE-UP CALL

Dialogue on Shared Responsibility and the Global Problem of Illicit Drugs

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have some good news and some bad news. The good news is that in most of the world, demand for cocaine is stable or even dropping. Coca cultivation has been slashed by a quarter in the past five years. And seizures of cocaine have almost doubled during that period. An astounding 42% of an cocaine produced was seized in 2005.

The bad news is the upward trend in Europe. I am not afraid to name and shame the worst offenders—Spain, England and Italy. The level of cocaine use in Spain which is 3% among those aged 15 to 64—now exceeds (for the first time ever) levels of cocaine use in the United States. And the UK is not far behind. In 2005, annual prevalence for cocaine use in this country was 2.4%, up from 0.6% a decade earlier.

Look at another leading indicator. Ten years ago, in the Netherlands 20% of all new clients entering treatment for drug abuse were addicted to cocaine. Less than a decade later the proportion was 40%. In Spain, the proportion in 1995 was 7%. In 2002 it was 42%. and I would bet that the proportion has continued to rise since then.

Wake up Europe! You are heading for a crisis. We are facing a pandemic, and not only because of coca addiction by high profile entertainers, executives, models or socialites who flaunt their illicit drug, use in words and deeds. This is a symptom of a deeper problem—one made worse by uncritical reporting in the media.

What will it take to get people to take the problem seriously? A phone call from a hospital that your child or colleague has had an overdose? Or was caught in the cross-fire of a drug-related shooting? Or killed in an accident under the influence of drugs? That's what happened in America's cities in the 1980s, especially as coca turned into crack. If we are not careful it is coming to our neighborhoods.

Europe's growing cocaine problem is due to a number of factors.

First, drug addicts are switching from narcotics, heroine, to psychoactive substances. Coca is fashionable because it is attractive: white not dark; sniffed not injected; taken in a living room; not in a dark alley; symbol of success not evidence of failure. Second and because of all of the above, cocaine users are in denial, no chance of AIDS, a trendy white collar habit. Celebrities get away with it so when is the problem? Well, there is a problem as recognized by a 17 year old inmate I met in a prison in Naples: "I thought that I could control the white lady—la signora bianca—that I could have her whenever I

wanted. But soon she controlled me, and I became her slave."

Secondly, governments are in denial. Too many governments—particularly in rich countries—fail to invest political capital to prevent and treat drug abuse. As a consequence, their societies have the drug problem they deserve.

Interesting is the case of Sweden. Over the past three decades, successive governments have invested consistently and significantly in drug treatment and prevention. As a result, Sweden has been one of the cleanest—most drug-free—societies in Europe. Well; but even there, cocaine abuse is creeping in.

Economists have recognized for centuries that bad money chases away good money. Bad habits spread quickly; especially in affluent, fast-paced societies. Emerging economies, in particular, should be on the alert for a rise in cocaine use, including in Russia and China where health ministers have told me that there are no problems with cocaine in their countries. My response? Brace yourself. It's on the way.

Europe's cocaine habit is not only causing problems on this continent. It is making life difficult for President Uribe and other Andean leaders, not to mention all states between here and Latin America affected by drug trafficking.

So we face a problem of credibility. How can Europe urge the Andean countries to reduce supply when its drug habit is driving cultivation?

We all need to get serious about assuming our responsibility for the drug problem. I therefore applaud the Colombian Government's efforts to promote a dialogue on shared responsibility. What are some ways that we can work together?

Surely we should do more to support alternative development. Most illicit crop growers (Afghanistan, Colombia or Laos), live in some of the poorest communities in the world. Crop eradication will not work over the long term if there is no legal economy to replace it. Drug control and development must therefore go hand in hand.

International donors should provide more assistance to coca farmers. For its part, I urge the Government of Colombia to involve a broad range of ministries in developing a coherent alternative development strategy that will assist coca farmers.

More attention should be devoted to the environment. Coca farmers and producers slash and burn forests, pollute streams and damage fragile ecosystems (by the use of toxic chemicals). The Andean region has less than 1% of the world's land area, but more than 15% of the world's plant life. At a time when we are all so concerned about climate change. I urge all Europeans to think about the destruction done to our habitat for the sake of a line of cocaine.

The billions of dollars made through the narco-economy are empowering cartels, funding insurgency and financing terrorism. Cocaine ruins everything along the trail from the Andean countries through the Caribbean, Mexico, and West Africa to lucrative markets in Europe and North America, where gun crime and gang violence associated with the drug trade have turned some urban neighborhoods into war zones.

Ladies and gentlemen. The alarm clock is ringing. Europe, it is time to wake up and get going. Supply control is not enough. Imagine that this year we seize all 900-odd tons of Andean cocaine. Well as many tons will be produced next year.

Imagine if Andean farmers gave up all their coca crops. Francisco, this is your dream!! That is not enough, since demand by the world's 13 million cocaine addicts will generate as much cultivation somewhere else.

Plainly speaking, the mother of all drug control challenges is drug prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. This too is a shared responsibility in our communities. Drugs are too big a problem to be left to drug experts. Society at large should be actively engaged.

Only by working together on all aspects of drug control will we be able to move towards a healthier and safer world.

Thank you for your attention.

HONORING HIS EXCELLENCY
EURIPIDES EVRIVIADES, AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

HON. MICHAEL BILIRAKIS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 13, 2006

Mr. BILIRAKIS. Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to honor the departing Ambassador of the Republic of Cyprus to the United States, His Excellency Euripides Evriviades.

Ambassador Evriviades has served in this post since December 2003, but his diplomatic career is long and distinguished. Prior to serving as Cyprus' Ambassador to the United States, he served as the Ambassador to the Netherlands, August 2000 to October 2003, and Ambassador to Israel, November 1997 until July 2000. Since 1976, he has served in a variety of diplomatic positions, proudly representing Cyprus and her citizens.

It has been my honor and privilege to work with Ambassador Evriviades on issues important to Cypriots. I have come to regard him as an effective, determined, and passionate advocate for his country, a man who remains committed to the reunification of Cyprus and who has pursued this goal even when it put him at odds with others.

I want to bid a fond farewell to Ambassador Evriviades and offer him my congratulations and appreciation for his 3 years of service in our Nation's Capital. I praise the Ambassador for his tremendous efforts and contributions to raise awareness among Members of Congress and administration officials of Cyprus' desire to be reunified. He will be greatly missed, and I wish him all the best in the years to come.

RECOGNIZING HANS GEISSLER OF
DADE CITY, FLORIDA

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, November 13, 2006

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor Hans Geissler, the founder of Morning Star Fishermen. Mr. Geissler was recently selected from a group of volunteer and service organization workers aged 60 and older who were nominated to participate in a symposium at Stanford University. This symposium highlights community service and the use of business experience in the volunteer service field.

Since leaving the French Foreign Legion and retiring from a career as a plumbing contractor, Mr. Geissler has worked tirelessly to help solve one of the world's biggest problems—world hunger. Based out of his 11-acre facility in Dade City, Florida, Mr. Geissler